

**Wetland Water Quality Standards Subcommittee
(of the Water Quality Standards Advisory Committee)**

**Held at DES Coastal Office- Portsmouth, NH
18 Oct 2012 10 am – 12 pm**

Members in attendance	
Tracy Tarr	John St. John
Don Kretchmer	Ron Rhodes
Presenters	
Dave Neils, NHDES	Jeanne Di Franco, Maine DEP
DES staff	
Christine Bowman	Ken Edwardson
Sandy Crystall	Gregg Comstock

Agenda Item 1. Introductions

Sandy Crystall welcomed everyone, especially noted the extra travel distance to the DES coastal office in Portsmouth (for some attendees) and asked everyone to introduce themselves around the table.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of minutes

Comments on 5/24/2012 minutes were requested. A correction to the attendance list was noted.

Agenda Item 5. [out of order] Survey status - Wetlands GIS coverage

The agenda was slightly revised. **Ken Edwardson** gave an update on the wetland GIS data survey. An email with a link to the survey will be sent on Friday, October 19, to municipalities and posted on Plan-Link, the email listserv managed by the Office of Energy and Planning.

Agenda Item 3. Developing an Index of Biological Integrity

Sandy introduced the first presenter, **Dave Neils**, on the development of an index of biological integrity (PowerPoint presentation posted)

Questions

Ron Rhodes asked, what is the length of a reach [that is being assessed]?

Dave: About 150 meters, but may vary. DES has used 20x the wetted width, unless it is a very large river.

Agenda Item 4. Development of Wetland Aquatic Life Use Criteria

Sandy introduced the next presenter, **Jeanne DiFranco** from the Maine DEP with her presentation “Development of Wetland Aquatic Life Use Criteria” (PowerPoint presentation posted).

Questions

Sandy asked, how long has it taken to conduct monitoring and develop the criteria to reach the point of making attainment decisions?

Jeanne:

- Maine conducted its first wetlands biomonitoring in 1998.

- In 2005-2006, they honed-in on protocols to collect good standardized data. They standardized their collection methods for wetland algae samples in 2005-2006, but had already been using the same macroinvertebrate sampling methods since 2000-2001.
- In 2010, Maine made its first effort at making attainment decisions in the integrated report. The decisions were based on BPJ (best professional judgment).
- In 2012, Maine made attainment decisions based on provisional model, but still using narrative criteria for now.

Tracy Tarr asked how assessment units are defined.

Jeanne: For impaired areas, assessment units are defined specifically (may be a more limited area than the extent of the NWI polygon).

Jeanne Di Franco mentioned Maine's next steps:

- Maine wants to analyze the algae data from the samples that were collected.
- Maine received a small EPA grant to start looking at forested wetland sites. They probably won't be in the field before the 2014 field season.

Agenda Item 6. Discussion

Don Kretchmer commented that perhaps New Hampshire should collect data like Maine has and run with it (use the Maine model).

Gregg Comstock suggested that for New Hampshire's plan to develop water quality standards for wetlands, we should consider the process that Maine followed.

John St. John asked if the criteria are set for water quality, what should we measure?

Sandy Crystall mentioned that DES's next step will be to develop a draft outline for a plan using what we've learned from Maine and other states.

Agenda Item 7. Next meeting date

Rather than wait until January, DES will try for an early December meeting and try for a webinar/conference call to eliminate the need for subcommittee members to travel.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 pm.